



[Dedan Kimathi, 1920-1957](#)

The Armed People

A practical, actually-existing alternative to the bourgeois State – The Commune – arose in Paris, France, in the beginning of 1871.

It was more than the right of recall, and it was more than the whole people collectively in power and in perpetual democratic session. It was also the reappearance of The Armed People in a new kind of societal framework.

So-called Primitive Communism is an Armed People. Primitive Communism has been destroyed, and continues to be destroyed, by the simultaneous rise of property relations and fall of the women. But here, in the Paris Commune, was an

Armed People in advanced productive circumstances. The Paris Commune prefigured the end of the bourgeois State's monopoly of violence, and the consequent eventual fall of the bourgeois State in the world as a whole.

The security forces (army and police) existing in France prior to the Paris Commune had been paid by the bourgeois State to guarantee its survival. They were tasked with suppressing the working class, whenever they found suppression to be necessary, by any means of suppression they thought necessary, and they were therefore constantly prepared for bloodshed and slaughter. These forces were disbanded by the Commune and were not replaced until the Commune fell.

With hardly any exceptions, all "separations of powers" were abolished in the Paris Commune, leaving one main and constant power: The Armed People.

A century later in Chile, in the time of the Popular Unity government that fell on 11 September 1973, instead of an Armed People, a virtue was made of disarmament, and a "Peaceful Path" was worshipped as the new political Golden Calf.

In the document linked below, Volodia Teitelboim gives a brief description, from the point of view of one of those who was involved in the Chilean Popular Unity government, of its disastrous end. The fascists used the national army to overthrow the national government on behalf of the bourgeoisie. It was a shocking reminder of the real purpose

and nature of the “special bodies of armed men” that are part of The State. They are intended to preserve the allegiance of the State to the bourgeoisie.

Teitelboim calls for “A Reappraisal of the Issue of the Army,” meaning a return to the view of the Paris Commune, which is mentioned in the first line of Teitelboim’s document. This document is sufficient as the basis for a very good and necessary discussion in South Africa at this time.

Like the Chilean Popular Unity government, ours in South Africa today is a multiclass government underpinned by a class alliance for common goals. It is a unity-in-action, otherwise called a Popular Front.

Why has the South African NDR survived for nearly 22 years, while the Chilean Popular Unity fell after 1,000 days?

The answer could be that we are not pacifists, as so many of the Chilean Popular Unity politicians were.

Or, the answer could be that our crisis has just not arrived yet.

Or, that we have passed at least one crisis, which may not yet be the last. That was in mid-2008, and it was resolved by the recall of President Mbeki and the resignation of various ministers including Terror Lekota and Mluleki George, Minister and Deputy Minister of Defence, respectively.

Also attached is Dimitrov’s famous intervention at the 7th

Congress of the Communist International (Comintern), in 1934, which readopted popular front tactics - tactics that proved successful in mobilising the anti-fascist alliance that was by 1945 victorious in battle.

Picture: There are very few images of freedom fighters in formation, in action, or ready for action, to be found on the Internet, whether of MK or of any other liberation army, but there are many photographs of freedom fighters in captivity, or dead.

Full justice has not yet been done. Alive or dead, the revolutionaries are still rebels and outcasts in the minds of the “respectable” bourgeoisie. For our part, we are still singing the Internationale, composed in Paris in the days of the Commune by the communard [Eugène Pottier](#).

The picture is of a statue of the freedom fighter Dedan Kimathi, under the blue sky of Kenya.

AMANDLA!

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [1,000 Days of Popular Unity Rule in Chile, 1977, Teitelboim](#); [Intervention on Popular Front, Dimitrov, 1934](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).